

# The Latest Threat to Social Security

Our Social Security benefits are under attack, but that's nothing new. Wealthy Americans and their political allies have been fighting Social Security for 75 years. The reality is that Social Security is a successful retirement fund, relied upon by tens of millions of Americans to prevent poverty in our later years.

The White House recently created by executive order the 18-member, "bipartisan" National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility, whose purpose is to find ways to reduce the federal deficit, most likely through spending decreases. Social Security cuts are on the table and the program is realistically in danger of advancing to the chopping block.

Nevertheless, despite uproar from those who advocate slashing government spending, Social Security is not a burden on our national deficit. The truth is that Social Security is currently running a \$2.2 trillion surplus, and the infamous trust fund is in no danger of running out; in fact, the surplus is estimated to increase to \$4.3 trillion by 2023. Plus, Social Security is funded by a wage tax, and in 2010 took in more than it paid out. If opponents are so concerned with the system's sustainability, they could always advocate for higher wages for workers – that would automatically increase revenues and the problem would be solved. So far, however, no one has proposed that idea.

If it doesn't affect the deficit, then why is one of our country's most beloved benefits being threatened?

Consider the alternative: privatization of Social Security. If Social Security were privatized, that multi-trillion dollar surplus would be handed over to Wall Street – the same guys that brought us the financial collapse that reduced the value of American workers' homes, 401k plans, and pension savings by billions of dollars. And Wall Street is looking at all that money, dreaming about the fees it could collect if it were all diverted into private accounts.

But it is our money. We earned it, we saved it, and now we need to fight to keep it.

Those who want to privatize Social Security are attempting the divide and conquer method to keep us from speaking out. If you are less than 20 years away from retirement, they tell you... ..the cuts won't affect you, so chances are you won't be motivated to protect the program. If you are a new-comer to the workforce, they convince you from the start that you will never receive Social Security, so again, chances are you won't voice opposition when they take it away. We can't let this happen!

Social Security is the most successful social program in our nation's history, and it is a necessary safety net to ensure that we, our families, and our neighbors, live and retire with dignity (see chart for facts and statistics on Social Security).

If 14 of the 18 members of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility decide to make cuts to Social Security, the decision will be fast-

tracked to Congress in December – after the elections. We need to call our current Congressmen and our federal candidates today and get them to commit now to oppose any cuts to or privatization of Social Security.

## Social Security Fast Facts

- **6 in 10 seniors rely on Social Security for more than half of their income**
- **For 30% of all recipients, Social Security accounts for 90% of their retirement income**
- **9.5 million people rely on Social Security as their sole source of income**
- **Today defined-benefit pension plans cover only 20% of workers, and that figure continues to fall**
- **6 million children (nearly 9% of all U.S. children) receive part of their family income from Social Security**
- **Average monthly retirement benefit is only \$1,199 in Pennsylvania, \$1,286 in New Jersey, and \$1,237 in Delaware**
- **If Social Security had been privatized during the stock market meltdown, seniors would have lost billions more than they already did in retirement savings**
- **If allow Social Security to be privatized now, our hard earned money will be handed over to Wall Street**

**Where does your Congressman stand on Social Security?  
Find out BEFORE November!**

# Bill's Article

Bill Cruice, Esq., PASNAP Executive Director



This November, nurses and other health care professionals are facing one of the most critical elections in recent memory. At a time when our economy continues to suffer through the aftermath of the wreckage brought on by a decade of Wall Street greed and recklessness, pro-Wall Street politicians are everywhere boldly seeking a fresh mandate to return to the same failed policies that caused the economic crisis in the first place.

Here in Pennsylvania, the candidates to be most concerned about are Pat Toomey (US Senate), Tom Corbett (Governor), and Pat Meehan (7th Congressional District). Employees in the health care industry should be particularly worried about this pro-Wall Street crowd, not just in these races but up and down the ballot in both state and federal contests that will shape our ability to win the working conditions we deserve over the next 10 years.

In this newsletter, we share with our members those candidates that our union has endorsed in the upcoming election. We make these endorsement decisions based on positions the candidate has taken on issues that directly impact our working lives as healthcare professionals. Does the candidate support our legislative agenda of patient safety, establishing nurse to patient ratios, whistleblower protection and prohibitions on mandatory overtime? Does the candidate favor solutions to the health care crisis that puts patients before the profits of hospitals and the insurance industry? Does the candidate support laws that strengthen the protection of working people who are struggling to form a union and bargain collectively for improvements on the job?

We also analyze the candidates' positions on the economy as a whole. Right now, working families are bearing the brunt of disastrous decisions made by wealthy individuals and firms on Wall Street over the last decade. While the rich can shrug

off the losses, our neighborhoods, our friends, our families are really struggling. The last thing we should do is reward Wall Street by electing more of their political friends in to office because we are frustrated and angry with the status quo.

Take Pat Toomey, the Republican US Senate candidate as exhibit #1. While working on Wall Street, Pat Toomey actually helped to create the market in the derivative trading that brought our economy to its knees 2 years ago. Pat Toomey wants to cut Medicare, cut and privatize Social Security and eliminate critical funding for struggling rural hospitals. He has opposed increases to the minimum wage and voted to eliminate overtime pay eligibility for more than 8 million workers. He has opposed unions at every opportunity and has said passage of the Employee Free Choice Act would be "an abomination." While a member of Congress from Allentown in the 1990s, Toomey had a lifetime pro-labor voting record of 7%, one of the worst in the history of the Congress.

On the positive side, Congressman Joe Sestak has been a strong friend of our union and a staunch advocate for the priorities of nurses and health care professionals while in Congress. He is a co-sponsor of the nurse to patient ratio bill as well as the Employee Free Choice Act. Joe Sestak deserves our strongest possible support as he opposes Pat Toomey and his Wall Street friends attempting to dupe Pennsylvania voters into handing them this key US Senate seat.

Running to replace Joe Sestak is one of the strongest friends that nurses and healthcare professionals could have among political leaders. State Representative Bryan Lentz has co-sponsored patient safety legislation in Harrisburg and strongly supports PASNAP's legislative agenda. As important, Bryan Lentz was a fierce supporter of the Temple nurses in their recent strike, speaking publicly at rallies and demanding that Temple Administration end their illegal behavior during the contract negotiations. Members living in the 7th District in Delaware County are strongly urged to work on Bryan's behalf to see that he is elected to replace Joe Sestak this November.

Finally, because much of the funding for our hospitals flows through state government in Harrisburg, it is vital that the Governor is someone that is sympathetic to the needs of nurses, health care professionals and working families generally. Don Onorato comes from a working class background and was very impressive when he met with PASNAP's political action committee. He says he will sign the nurse to patient ratio bill when it reaches his desk and will work with our union to fully implement the ban on mandatory overtime. We urge all of our members and their families to vote for Dan Onorato this November 2nd.

## Friend PASNAP Politics on Facebook



**PasnAP Politics is a space for politically minded PASNAP members to find out how what's going on and how to get involved**

**Follow the 2010 Elections  
Help get Ratios Passed in PA  
Volunteer for your Candidates  
See the Status of our Bills  
Get invited to Political Events  
Hold your Legislators accountable**

# ONE NATION | WORKING TOGETHER

## A national march on Washington DC



## Saturday, October 2, 2010

**Demand the change we voted for!**

Nurses and other health care professionals believe all working people deserve the opportunity to achieve the American Dream — a secure job, a safe home, and a quality education.

ONE NATION seeks to unite health care professionals & other working people across the country to transcend our differences in a common quest for equal opportunity and justice for all.

**March with us in Washington to:**

- Create millions of good jobs
- Protect Social Security & Improve Medicare
- Preserve essential safety net services
- Repair our immigration system
- Hold Wall Street Accountable

**Contact your PASNAP staff representative  
for more information**

**[www.OneNationWorkingTogether.org](http://www.OneNationWorkingTogether.org)**

### One Nation Endorsing Members

**PASNAP**

**California Nurses Association**

**American Rights at Work**

**Black Leadership Forum**

**Coalition of Black Trade Unionists**

**Communication Workers of America**

**Jewish Funds for Justice**

**AFL-CIO**

**National Nurses United**

**Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights**

**A. Philip Randolph Institute**

**National Council of La Raza**

**Campaign for America's Future**

**Transportation Workers Union of America**

**We will have buses leaving from near Temple and Crozer Hospitals at 7 am on October 2. Based on number of commitments, a bus may be available from NEPA or Western PA. Call ASAP and let us know if you are coming. Transportation is free.**

# Key Pennsylvania Po

## United States Senate

### Joe Sestak



#### Current Position

US Congressman  
PA District 7

Current cosponsor of Nurse to Patient Ratios (H.R. 2273) and Safe Lifting (H.R. 2381) bills in the House, committed to signing on to these bills in the Senate

Original cosponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act

Cosponsored and voted for improved worker safety laws and better whistleblower protection

Voted to prevent inaccurate labeling of employees as supervisors (which would make them ineligible to join a union)

Opposes privatization to Social Security and voted for an 11% increase for the Social Security Administration

Helped get an investment of \$4 billion for the Pennsylvania health care sector.

**“Quality health care is critical for America’s collective prosperity and national security.”**

Called EFCA, which would ensure workers the right to organize and earn a fair contract, “an abomination”

Voted to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to eliminate the overtime pay eligibility of 8 million+ workers.

Voted for the reversal of a workplace safety law and permanently prohibited federal regulators from implementing workplace safety laws against repetitive stress injuries.

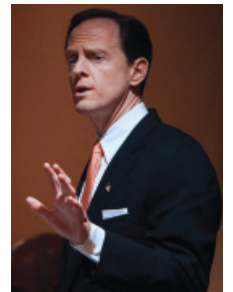
Supports the privatization of Social Security and cuts to Medicare

Voted against the Patients’ Bill of Rights, which would take medical decisions out of the hands of insurance companies

Opposed increased funding for rural hospitals

Would be a disaster for Pennsylvania’s middle class and working families.

### Pat Toomey



#### Current Position

Wall Street Advocate

**“EFCA actually would take away employees’ choices by forcing them to unionize.”**

# Political Races in 2010

## Governor of Pennsylvania

### Dan Onorato



#### Current Position

County Executive of Allegheny County

**“We cannot solve the health care crisis without a skilled health care workforce.”**

Has committed to signing the PA safe staffing ratios bill into law, and addressing the shortage of nurses and other health care providers.

Will work with the Department of Labor to better enforce the mandatory overtime law.

Has promised that representatives of the labor movement will have a seat on every state board.

Ran Pennsylvania’s second-largest county for six years without raising property taxes, and Allegheny county is today a national leader in job creation.

Will ensure that Pennsylvania’s workforce is prepared for and able to access high-skill, well-paying jobs.

Plans to create a temporary tax rebate program for business that hire unemployed workers or new entrants to the labor force – this rebate will only apply to permanent jobs that offer a family-sustaining wage and include incentives for positions that include health care.

Publicly said that many of the state’s jobless citizens would rather collect unemployment than go back to work.

Believes that the health care crisis can be solved through tort reform, market competition, and investment in technology

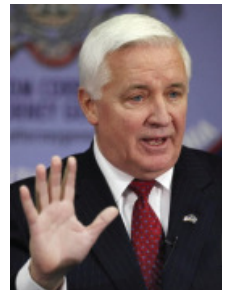
One of 13 attorney generals suing the federal government over the recent health care reform

Published an article in April entitled “Health Care Reform Law is Unconstitutional”

Thinks that low-paying jobs are just as good for Pennsylvanians as jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and provide health care for employees.

Has no record of advocating for safe Nurse to Patient Ratios or prohibitions on mandatory overtime.

### Tom Corbett



#### Current Position

Pennsylvania Attorney General

**“There are jobs there but if we extend Unemployment, people are just going to sit there.”**

# Congressional District 7

## Bryan Lentz



### Current Position

PA State Rep.  
District 161

Has publicly stated that he would oppose any cuts to Social Security or Medicare

Is a cosponsor of our safe staffing ratios bill in the PA State House, and has committed to signing on to all our federal bills establishing such ratios

Voted for the PA law banning mandatory overtime.

Attended and spoke passionately on behalf of PASNAP members at several during the strike at Temple University Hospital

Will continue the fight to ensure that all Americans have access to affordable health care.

**“I will be a tireless advocate for everyday Americans, standing up for the needs of the middle class.”**

Wants to destroy Social Security through the elimination the FICA tax, which is the tax collection mechanism for Social Security

Recently held a “health care reform roundtable,” which included 2 accountants, an HR consultant, and a physician from Mercy Suburban.

Has has accepted the endorsement of two local tea party organizations with predictably extreme stances on Social Security, Medicare

Has no record of advocating for safe Nurse to Patient Ratios or prohibitions on mandatory overtime.

## Pat Meehan



### Current Position

Candidate,  
Former US Attorney

**“need Meehan quote.”**

## Endorsements made by both PASNAP PAC and the PA ALF-CIO

### PA Governor

Dan Onorato - D

### PA Lt. Governor

Scott Conklin - D

### US Senate

Joe Sestak - D

### US Congress

1 Robert Brady -D

2 Chaka Fattah - D

3 Kathy Dahlkemper - D

6 Manan Trivedi - D

7 Bryan Lentz - D

8 Patrick Murphy - D

10 Chris Carney - D

11 Paul Kanjorski - D

13 Allyson Schwartz - D

16 Lois Herr - D

### PA House

18 Gene Digirolamo - R

26 Fern Kaufman - D

31 Steve Santarsiero - D

41 Jerry Policoff - D

56 James Casorio - D

61 Mary Lou Readinger - D

112 Ken Smith - D

113 Kevin Murphy - D

115 Edward Staback - D

116 Todd Eachus - D

118 Mike Carroll - D

120 Phyllis Mundy - D

121 Ed Pashinski - D

140 John Galloway - D

141 Tina Davis - D

148 Mike Gerber - D

151 Rick Taylor - D

153 Josh Shapiro - D

154 Larry Curry - D

155 Barbara Bergeron - D

156 Barb McIlvaine-Smith - D

157 Paul Drucker - D

158 Susan Rzucidlo - D

159 Thaddeus Kirkland - D

163 Nicholas Micozzie - R

166 Greg Vitali - D

169 Dennis O'Brien - R

# Violence on the Rise in Healthcare Setting

Health care & social service workers have the highest incidence of injury from workplace assaults.

Patricia Eakin, RN, BSN, CEN, PASNAP President



Recently, a triage nurse tried to explain to a patient that he needed to wait in the waiting room, that his constant interruptions demanding to be triaged would delay his treatment. He responded by unleashing a tirade of unprintable epithets and said he would blow her “f.....ing head off with a sawed-off shot gun” when she finished work.

This kind of verbal attack and threat is all too common in our hospitals these days. Healthcare workers are also experiencing a big rise in the both the frequency and severity of actual physical assaults.

Statistics show that the number of ER visits by addicted patients and mentally ill patients has climbed in the past 5 years, while available mental health services have decreased. Add to this the depressed economy, loss of jobs, loss of health care, and the mental health problems worsen. Although most of our patients are respectful, those with marginal social coping skills act out when their expectations are not met, which is often in our dysfunctional health care system.

Due to its escalation, workplace violence is starting to get more attention in the public realm. The Joint Commis-

sion issued an alert in June because of the rise of violence in hospitals, and indicated that the problem is underreported. Even the mainstream media now frequently publish articles about the problem, and recently, the Emergency Nurses Association published a survey that showed that more than half of their respondents had been assaulted in the last year.

These problems may be more concentrated in ERs, but they are everywhere. Not too long ago, one case manager described to me how she was trying to facilitate the discharge of an alleged gang member. As she was trying to help him, he told her how he would have her injured, where she parked her car, what model of car and the license number.

Compounding the problem is how hospital administrators respond to the violence. In the case of the triage nurse above, the security officer called to the scene simply told the patient, “Stop being rude to the nurses.” It took more than an hour for a manager to come out to help, and even then did nothing to support her. What’s more, the patient was given expedited care.

There has long been an unhealthy culture in hospitals of accepting some abuse and even violence as “part of the job.” Nurses have often been expected to “de-escalate” the situation, and are treated as if they have failed or are at fault if they are assaulted or can’t otherwise “manage” the crisis.

The criminal justice system is often equally unhelpful. Police, district attorneys, and judges routinely fail to treat the problem seriously. In the case of the triage nurse above, she called 911, but no one ever came. At Temple, five ER nurses have pressed charges for assault, but only the most recent case resulted in the judge remanding the patient to prison for aggravated assault.

These very serious issues need to be addressed.

On November 10, 2010, PASNAP will hold a conference with continuing education credits to begin to address the problem of and seek solutions for workplace violence. The program will be conducted by our friends of the National Nurses Union, the Massachusetts Nurses Association. They have been working successfully on this in Massachusetts and have a wealth of information for us.

The conference will look at ways to hold our hospital administrators accountable for providing a safe work environment and will evaluate the various recommendations and rules of the different regulatory bodies, such as JACHO and OSHA. We will look at legislation that exists to protect us and propose more legislation to strengthen it. We are also inviting district attorneys to talk about what they can do to prosecute offenders.

I have seen incidents of violence increase in my job over the last few years. One co-worker of mine is still out with a serious injury and continued pain and mental stress. We all need to put our heads together and solve this problem so that no other health care worker has to suffer an injury.

See you in November!

*Patricia Eakin*

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 170 Brendan Boyle - D    | 189 John Siptroth - D     |
| 172 John Perzel - R      | 190 Vanessa Brown - D     |
| 173 Mike McGeehan - D    | 191 Ronald Walters - D    |
| 174 John Sabatina - D    | 192 Louise Bishop - D     |
| 175 Mike O'Brien - D     | 193 Mike Strausbaugh - D  |
| 177 John Taylor - R      | 194 Pamela Delissio - D   |
| 179 Tony Payton - D      | 195 Michelle Brownlee - D |
| 180 Angel Cruz - D       | 196 Curtis Kann - D       |
| 182 Babette Josephs - D  | 198 Rosita Youngblood - D |
| 185 Robert Donatucci - D | 200 Cherelle Parker - D   |
| 186 Kenyatta Johnson - D | 201 John Myers - D        |
| 188 James Roebuck - D    | 202 Mark Cohen - D        |

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*Save the Date...*

**PASNAP/MNA Conference on  
Workplace Violence Against Nurses**

**Wednesday, November 10  
Hilton Philadelphia Airport**

**Violence against health care professionals  
at work is on the rise.**

**We need laws to protect us.**

**To register call April at (610) 567-2907 ext. 108**

**WHAT'S INSIDE?**

**The Latest Threat to Social Security**

**One Nation March on Washington**

**The 2010 Elections**

**Violence on the Rise in Health Care**

**... and more!**

**NATIONAL NURSES  
ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**

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